Serpit humi nemorum tutus, timidusque procella.
Flor. de Bello

CHORUS

116.30.d.4
14

OF

DRAMATIC POEM

OF

ELFRIDA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL in COVENT-GARDEN.

The MUSIC by Dr. ARNE.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXII.

(Price Six-Pence.)

ADVERTISEMENT.

MUCH time, attention, and expence, have been bestowed on the present occasion, in order to furnish an Entertainment of an uncommon nature. No exhibition of this kind has ever yet been attempted on the English Stage; nor is there, at this day, a Drama on this plan performed on any Theatre in Europe. The general voice has long ago declared the Dramatic Poem of ELFRIDA to be as pathetic as it is elegant. The music, being the work of a most Eminent Master, it is presumed will be found to be excellent. Of the Performance and Decorations, the Spectators will judge for themselves.

POPE has pleaded in behalf of SHAKESPEAR, that our Countryman ought not to be tried on the *Magna Charta* of ARISTOTLE. In the present instance, the case is nearly reversed. Yet the Jury are English: our Country also may boast of the Author. But (to drop the metaphor) let not those who have been habituated to the forms of the English Drama, suppose that a Tragedy cannot be constructed on another model. Let them divest themselves of the prejudices of custom as of learning. In a word, let them fairly deliver themselves up to their own feelings, not considering whether they are seated in the British Pit, or placed in the Theatre at Athens. The Representation, perhaps, may not be strictly conformable to the manners of either. It is hoped, however, that it will relish of somewhat that is excellent in both.

CHORUS
OF
ELFRIDA.

ACT I.

CHORUS *within.*

HAIL to thy living light,
Ambrosial Morn! all hail thy roseat ray!

CHORUS.

ODE.

Hail to thy living light,
Ambrosial Morn! all hail thy roseat ray,
That bids gay Nature all her charms display
In varied beauty bright!

Away, ye Goblins all,
Wont the traveller to daunt;
Whose ragrant feet have trac'd your haunt
Beſide ſome lonely wall!
Away, ye Elves, away,
Shrink at ambroſial Morning's living ray!

SEMICHORUS.

HUMANITY! thy awful ſtrain
Shall ever meet our ear,
Sonorous, ſweet, and clear.
And as amid the ſprightly-ſwelling train
Of dulcet notes, that breathe
From flute or lyre,
The deep baſs rolls its manly melody,
Guiding the tuneful choir;
So thou, HUMANITY, ſhalt lead along
Th' accordant paſſions in their moral ſong,
And give our mental concert trueſt harmony.

CHO-

CHORUS.

ODE.

The Turtle tells her plaintive tale,
Sequeſter'd in ſome ſhadowy vale;

The Lark in radiant æther floats,
And ſwells his wild extatic notes.
Meanwhile on yonder Hawthorn ſpray
The Linnet wakes her temp'rate lay;
No raptures lift, no griefs depreſs her ſong,
But ſoft ſhe trills amidſt th' aerial throng.

Sweet Bird! like thine our lay ſhall flow,
Nor gaily loud, nor ſadly ſlow;
For to thy note ſedate, and clear,
CONTENT ſtill lends a lift'ning ear.
Where'er thou art, enchanting Maid,
Thou ſoon wilt ſmile in Harewood's ſhade:
What time thou ſeek'ſt, with willing haſte,
Thy lovelieſt throne, ELFRIDA's breaſt.

And

And hark! completing our prophetic ſtrain,
The fleet hoof rattles o'er the flinty plain.
Now nearer, and now nearer ſounds.
Avaunt! ye vain deluſive fears.
Hark! Echo tells thro' Harewood's ampleſt bounds,
That Love, Content, and ATHELWOLD appears.

ACT II.

CHORUS.

ODE.

WHENCE does this ſudden luſtre riſe,
That gilds the grove? Not like the noon-tide beam,
Which, ſparkling, dances on the trembling ſtream,
Nor the blue lightning's flaſh ſwift-ſhooting thro' the ſkies.
But ſuch a ſolemn, ſteady light
As o'er the cloudleſs azure ſteals,
When Cynthia, riding on the brow of night,
Stops in her mid career her ſilver wheels.

Whence

Whence can it riſe, but from the ſober pow'r
Of CONSTANCY? She, heav'n-born Queen,
Deſcends; and here, in Harewood's hallow'd bow'r,
Fixes her ſtedfaſt reign:
Stedfaſt, as when around this nether ſphere
She winds the purple year.
Tells what time the ſnow-drop cold
Its maiden whiteneſs may unfold;
When the golden harveſt bend,
When the ruddy fruits deſcend,
Then bids pale Winter wake, to pour
The pearly hail's tranſlucent ſhow'r;
To caſt his ſilv'ry mantle o'er the woods,
And bind in cryſtal chains the ſlumb'ring floods.

ACT III.

SEMICHORUS.

SUSPENCE! thou frozen gueſt, be gone!
The wretch, whoſe rugged bed
Is lin'd with thorns, more ſoftly reſts his head,
Than he who ſinks amid the cygnet's down:
If Thou, tormenting fiend, be nigh
To prompt his ſtarting tear, his ceaſeleſs ſigh,
His wiſh, his pray'r, his vow for ling'ring certainty.

CHORUS.

ODE.

Say, will no white-rob'd Son of Light,
Swift-darting from his heav'nly height,
T Here deign to take his hallow'd ſtand;
Here wave his amber locks; unfold
His pinions cloth'd with downy gold;
Here ſmiling ſtretch his tutelary wand?

And you, ye hoſt of Saints! for ye have known
Each dreary path in Life's perplexing maze;
Tho' now ye circle yon eternal throne
With harpings high of inexpreſſive praiſe;
Will not your train deſcend in radiant ſtate,
To break with Mercy's beam this gathering cloud of Fate?

'Tis ſilence all. No Son of Light
Darts ſwiftly from his heav'nly height;
No train of radiant Saints deſcend.
Mortals, in vain ye hope to find,
If guilt, if fraud has ſtain'd your mind,
Or Saint to hear, or Angel to defend.

ACT

ACT IV.

CHORUS.

ODE.

ATTEND, ye Sons of Men! attend, and say,
Does not TRUTH's refulgent ray
Break thro' the veil of your mortality?
Say, does not Reason in her form descry
Nameleſs glories, that ſurpaſs
The Angel's pomp, the Seraph's grace?

Know, Mortals, know, ere firſt ye ſprung,
Ere firſt theſe orbs in æther hung,
TRUTH ſhone amid the heav'nly throng:
Her eyes beheld Creation's day,
Her voice began the choral lay,
And taught Archangels their triumphant ſong.

Meas'd,

Pleas'd, She ſurvey'd bright Nature's gradual birth,
Saw infant light, with kindling luſtre, ſpread,
Soft fragrance clothe the flow'ring earth,
And Ocean heave on his extended bed.

Laſt, Man aroſe! the high behеſt was giv'n,
That She alone, of all the hoſt of Heav'n,
Should reign Protectreſs of the Royal Youth!
Thus the Almighty ſpoke, and call'd her TRUTH.

ACT V.

CHORUS.

Hear, Angels, Hear!
Hear from theſe nether Thrones of Light;
And O! in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.

SEMICHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear!

CHO.

CHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear!
Hear from these nether thrones of Light;
And O! in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of Eternity!

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